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REPORT NO.

TOPIC Maneuvers in Thuringia

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PLACE OBTAINED.

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DATE OF CONTENT.

DATE PREPARED.

4 November 1953

REFERENCES

ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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1. During the period from 9 to 20 October 1953, air force units equipped with MiG-15s, Yak-11s and Il-10s were continually observed holding joint exercises with army troops in the area between Weimar and Thuringer Wald. On 9, 10 and 11 October, when the army units were assembling near Bad Berka, air activity was limited to flights, probably reconnaissance missions, over the assembly area. The formations observed never numbered more than four aircraft each. At most two formations of four MiG-15s and two formations of four aircraft of other types were observed simultaneously over the area.
2. After the ground troops had started their attacks on 12 October, ground attack aircraft attacked patches of woodland and roads, remaining over the battle area for up to one hour; the MiG-15s were seen over the area up to 35 minutes. The ground attack aircraft approached in formations, frequently flying along valleys, suddenly climbed changing their formation to line-abreast formation, and then dived at the targets from an altitude of 200 to 300 meters at an angle of 20 to 40 degrees. The aircraft pulled out of dive 20 to 25 meters above the ground. While zooming, the aircraft again assembled in formation and repeated their attacks at the ground targets. MiG-15s were only employed for the protection of the attacking aircraft. No night sorties were observed.
3. As the weather was good during the maneuver and there was good visibility at times, it could be observed that the bulk of the units landed near Erfurt.

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Comment. Evaluation of reports covering the period from 8 to 22 October 1953 indicates that probably the following units of the Twenty-Fourth Air Army participated in the maneuver in Thuringia held by the Eighth Gds Army between 13 and 15 October 1953:

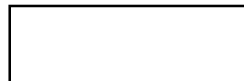
- Fighter division in Merseburg with the fighter regiments from Koethen, Merseburg and Altenburg airfields;
- Fighter division in Grossenhain with the fighter regiments from Grossenhain and Brand airfields;
- Ground attack division in Brandenburg with the ground attack regiments from Brandenburg-Friest and Brandenburg-Arado airfields;
- Ground attack division in Alt-Loennewitz with the ground attack regiments from Brandis, Alt-Loennewitz and Finsterwalde airfields.

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The following transfers were probably effected in connection with the assembly of air units in the battle area;
Ground attack regiments from Brandenburg-Iriest and Brandenburg-Arado, and probably one fighter regiment from Grossenhain to Erfurt-Bindersleben airfield;
Ground attack regiment from Alt-Loennowitz to Schkeuditz near Leipzig and elements of this regiment possibly to Merseburg;
Possibly the ground attack regiment from Finsterwalde to Altenburg airfield, as ground attack aircraft were observed at this field.
Since the number of aircraft and air activity at Melzow, Brand and Grossenhain airfields decreased considerably during the period of the maneuvers, it is assumed that the fighter regiments from these airfields were transferred to other airfields for the maneuver. The aircraft were probably transferred to Erfurt-Bindersleben, Altenburg and Koethen airfields as an increased number of aircraft was observed at these fields.
The fact that the units assembled in the Koethen-Brandis-Altenburg area as well as in the Erfurt-Bindersleben area may indicate that the air force units were organized into an eastern group and a western group during the maneuver, while the attacking army units probably moved from the Ilm River south of Weimar toward the west into the area around Arnstadt.

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